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The Sculptor of the BPL's Edgar Allan Poe Bust Has Left a Trail of Dissatisfied Clients

And the BPL doesn't seem to mind.

Nick DeLuca
October 10, 2014 @3:03pm

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These days, perhaps more so than other times, Boston is deeply in touch with its literary roots. With the recent launch of the Literary Cultural District and the unveiling of the life-sized statue of gloomy writer Edgar Allan Poe, the city is at least wearing its bookish sentiments on its period style sleeves. Another addition to this collection of erudite accolades is poised to join the ranks, a bust of Poe to be hung in the hallowed halls of the Boston Public Library.

Or so we hope.

Back in June, a Kickstarter campaign was launched to raise $30,000 to bring a bust of Poe to the BPL courtesy of sculptor Bryan Moore. Having already sculpted a bust of horror fiction writer H.P. Lovecraft for the Providence Athenaeum in August 2013, the funds for which were also crowdsourced via Kickstarter, Moore seemed the logical, if not tailor-made, choice to undertake such a project here in Boston.

> "LIKE ALL OTHER MATERIALS EVALUATED, OUR FOCUS IS THE OBJECT ITSELF AND ITS POTENTIAL TO ENHANCE THE LIBRARY'S COLLECTION

In July, the bust project was completely funded. Donors even rendered a cash surplus of over $5,000. In fact, Academy Award nominated director Guillermo del Toro (*Pan's Labyrinth)* reportedly threw down to help bring the bust to fruition and expects to receive a replica of the work for his personal collection.

BostInno was able to get in touch with Moore back in May to gauge his inspiration for the project and how early developments were faring. He was willing to talk and was amiable in his email correspondence. Things took a turn when he noticed a public comment in our article announcing the project that referred to him as both a con artist and a Satanist.

Moore requested we remove the comment. We didn't. It's been radio silence with him ever since.

Upon further investigation, it turns out, this disgruntled reader isn't the only one who has qualms with Moore.

Moore's Arkham Studios currently boasts an 'F' rating by the Better Business Bureau on a traditional academic scale based on several complaints that have been levied against him. The most common, according to one online forum dedicated to the follies of Arkham Studios, is that Moore accepts payment for bust commissions and fails to deliver a finished product.

BostInno was able to get in contact with one such unsatisfied customer. Though based out of Brazil, "Stephan" confirmed with Moore via email that the latter ships his products internationally for a shipping-and-handling fee of $40.

For the sake of protecting Stephan's privacy, I've omitted his last name and blurred out his and Moore's email addresses below. Stephan placed an order for a statue of Anton Szandor LaVey, to which Moore responded:

Almost one year later, in April 2013, Moore still hadn't produced the work he was paid for though he assured Stephan that his order would likely be ready by June of that year.

Date: Mon, 1 Apr 2013 09:56:00 -0700
From: arkham
Subject: Re: Regarding my statue
To:

Hi Stephan,

First off, your English is excellent and very likely much better than my attempts at the Brazilian language would be! :)

As I recall, you ordered the steel finish LaVey statue, which is more silver than gold colored. is that all right?

I should be able to get it to you by June 11th.

I'm very sorry to hear about the problems of Brazilian customs! That is indeed unfortunate! I'll be sure to get a tracking number for you when I send your statue.

As far as the sculpting commission for the Zodiac Killer, do you want a full figure in the classic of him holding the gun with his costume on or simply a bust? Once you let me know I can quote you a fee, but my private work usually starts at around $3000.00 per piece.

Hope you're well!

Bryan

Bryan Moore
www.arkham-studios.com

Enter the text to appear at the bottom of each email you send

When June rolled around, however, Moore had yet to finish, let alone ship, Stephan's order.

Date: Mon, 17 Jun 2013 11:29:15 -0700
From: arkham.
Subject: Re: AntonLaVey Statue / Lovecraft Project
To:

helping me to finish at least 100 back orders that need to go out. I had remolded the LaVey original master parts as I wasn't happy with the quality of the castings that I was getting, hence the delay.

I'll advise when you're order is ready to ship, which should be very soon.

My best you,

Bryan

Bryan Moore
www.arkham-studios.com

Enter the text to appear at the bottom of each email you send

Stephan told me his last email to Moore in January of this year went unanswered and to this day has not received his bust.

"It seems that he only delivers his goodies to famous people, friends and Public Libraries; the vast majority of his customers that don't fit in those categories must await until the End of Time," Stephan told me. "He fooled not only me, but some American customers too, so it's not a matter of distance."

Dan Currie, an independent research consultant and the former founding president of the Poe Foundation of Boston who sat on the design selection committee for the recently installed life-sized statue of Poe by Stefanie Rocknack, is equally disturbed by the allegations raised against Moore.

"Moore has in effect been capitalizing on the Poe-related work that others in Boston have been doing for six years or more (in connection with a wholly-separate from him Poe statue project)," Currie wrote in an email. He added,

> Should the BPL be interested to know any of this? What process of screening does the BPL employ to protect itself from the type of allegedly disreputable activities that seem to be associated with this project? And since when, and according to what contract or BPL policy, is it possible for Mr. Moore to guarantee on Kickstarter that any donor to his cause (I guess no matter who they are) will have their name 'immortalized' on a large plaque in Boston's central library if they give him $500 or more?

Paul Lewis, Boston College English professor and chair of the Edgar Allan Poe Foundation of Boston, Inc., which oversaw fundraising for Rocknack's life-sized statue, was unwilling to comment on Moore and his background.

I reached out to the Boston Public Library to determine what kind of background information they were able to uncover about Moore and if they opted to accept his project knowing full well his history of not completing commissioned projects.

BPL spokeswoman Rosemary Lavery told me the BPL has "a thoughtful and strategic process in place regarding adding items to its collection, which includes gifts." BPL curators work in tandem with the Collections Department to evaluate items and gifts based on the likes of "public service needs, locally available resources, and relevance to the interest and needs of the community."

That, however, is about the extent of it.

"Like all other materials evaluated, our focus is the object itself and its potential to enhance the library's collection," Lavery added. "Library staff members reviewed the artist's body of work and determined the Poe bust was a fit for our collection. We look forward to the unveiling and sharing the bust for all to enjoy."

If all goes according to schedule, Moore's bust is slated to be unveiled at the Boston Public Library's Abbey Room on Thursday, Oct. 30, at 6 p.m. Paul Lewis and Moore himself are expected to make remarks prior to debuting the bust. Jeffrey Combs will also present a one-man performance of "NEVERMORE: An Evening With Edgar Allan Poe" at the Somerville Theatre the following night on Halloween.

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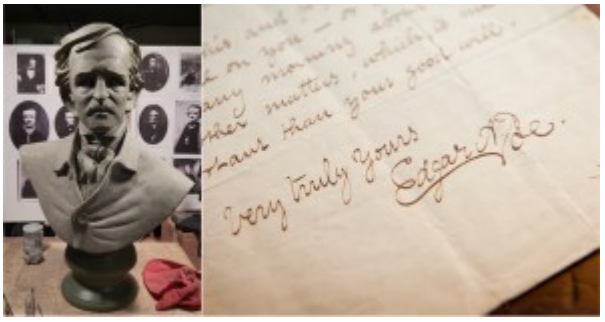

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